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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE REGULATION ADMINISTRATION BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:

R & A Restaurant Development Company Georgetown, LLC, Fact Finding t/a Five Guys 1335 Wisconsin Ave NW

Hearing [Extended Safekeeping]

Ret. Class CR

License #71127

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Suite 400S 2000 14TH STREET, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20009

The above-entitled matter convened at 2:43 p.m., before the District of Columbia Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration Board.

BEFORE:

RUTHANNE MILLER, Chairman NICK ALBERTI, Member DONALD BROOKS, Member HERMAN JONES, Member MIKE SILVERSTEIN, Member HECTOR RODRIGUEZ, Member JAMES SHORT, Member

Page 2 1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S 2 (2:43 p.m.)3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. have a fact finding hearing for Five Guys 4 located at 1335 Wisconsin Avenue Northwest, 5 License Number 71127. It involves a license 6 7 that has been in safekeeping for an extended amount of time. The licensee is not here but 8 9 Mr. Gordy is here from ABRA. Okay. When you're ready, if you 10 could introduce yourself for the record, 11 please? 12 13 MR. GORDY: Good afternoon. 14 name is Sean Gordy, Licensing Manager for the Alcohol and Beverage Regulation 15 Administration. 16 17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. As the 18 licensee is not here, we're wondering if you can give us some information about this 19 license that's been in extended safekeeping I 20 guess starting with how long it's been in 21 safekeeping and, then, you know, what facts 22

Page 3 1 you know about it? MR. GORDY: My understanding is 2 that the license has been in safekeeping since 3 approximately 2010 or thereabout. 4 licensee was a franchisee of Five Guys and 5 which I understand they pulled away from 6 7 corporate. 8 And the person representing the 9 licensee or was the licensee, a Rona, placed 10 the license in safekeeping, has maintained the 11 license in safekeeping in that she's been responsible for renewal fees, payments or 12 13 whatever was applicable. Rona basically took care of and, 14 as of March 2013, the CR was renewed. 15 16 license was renewed and that's pretty much 17 where we left it. CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Who is the 18 licensee you're referring to? 19 20 MR. GORDY: The contact person was 21 an individual by the first name of Rona.

CHAIRPERSON MILLER:

Verona?

22

Page 4 1 MR. GORDY: Rona. CHAIRPERSON MILLER: 2 Rona. 3 MR. GORDY: R-O-N-A. 4 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. That's the first name? 5 MR. GORDY: That's the first name 6 and, if I had the file, I would pull the email 7 address or her contact information. 8 But she 9 had been the individual contact person that 10 had been responsible and, basically, advised 11 our licensing specialist that, as corporate pulled away, they were going to hold the 12 13 license and wanted to hold the license in safekeeping until at which point they would be 14 able to remove the license from safekeeping 15 16 and operate their own business. 17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So, was that since 2010? 18 MR. GORDY: Yes, that was since 19 20 2010. 21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So, do you know what they've been doing in three or four 22

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1	years?
2	MR. GORDY: Other than renewing
3	the license at renewal and paying the
4	appropriate fees, no. They haven't been doing
5	anything with the license.
6	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Do you know
7	whether they were contacted for this hearing?
8	MR. GORDY: No. I don't know if
9	they if Ms. Walker attempted contact I
10	know. We've contacted our licensing
11	specialists, reached out to all the licenses
12	in safekeeping for second/third-year payment
13	
14	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Right.
15	MR. GORDY: did that process
16	this past March and April, 2014.
17	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Do you
18	know how she was reached out to?
19	MR. GORDY: Via email.
20	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Via email?
21	MR. GORDY: That's been the
22	contact method.

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1	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. So,
2	when was the last contact you had, you or your
3	licensing employees had with Rona?
4	MR. GORDY: Definitively, I
5	couldn't tell you, at this point.
6	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. And
7	you didn't get any response back from Rona
8	with respect to coming to this hearing?
9	MR. GORDY: No, ma'am.
10	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: But was there
11	express communication about the hearing?
12	MR. GORDY: Other than the letter
13	that would have been sent from adjudication,
14	that's the extent of communication.
15	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. So, to
16	your knowledge, there was a letter sent to
17	her?
18	MR. GORDY: Yes.
19	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. And to
20	your knowledge, there wasn't any response to
21	the letter?
22	MR. GORDY: No.

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1	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Other
2	members have questions? Mr. Alberti?
3	MEMBER ALBERTI: You probably
4	don't know the answer to this. What is she
5	waiting for? You probably don't know the
6	answer to this, Mr. Gordy, but for the LLC, do
7	we have from DCRA that they're in good
8	standing? I guess somebody would have done
9	that at renewal, right?
10	MR. GORDY: Right. Right. And
11	that would have been because the license was
12	renewed in March of 2013. So
13	MEMBER ALBERTI: The reason I'm
14	asking is because, apparently, we haven't
15	heard from these people in quite some time
16	except to get their renewal fees.
17	MR. GORDY: Right. Right.
18	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Was March
19	2013 the last time we had communication with
20	them?
21	MR. GORDY: In terms of renewal
22	and actually, physically having an exchange or

	Page 8
1	conversation, to my knowledge, yes, sir.
2	MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay. So, when's
3	the last time they requested extension of
4	safekeeping?
5	MR. GORDY: The last time the
6	license renewed.
7	MEMBER ALBERTI: When did they
8	actually make a request for this safekeeping,
9	do you know?
10	MR. GORDY: The original request
11	or an extension?
12	MEMBER ALBERTI: Extensions.
13	MR. GORDY: Extensions?
14	MEMBER ALBERTI: Yes.
15	MR. GORDY: I have no record of
16	when the last time they requested.
17	MEMBER ALBERTI: But it would be
18	in the file, correct?
19	MR. GORDY: Yes, sir.
20	MEMBER ALBERTI: All right. I
21	think we should take a look at their last
22	request for safekeeping. I'm not sure. And

Page 9 1 I think the Board needs to take a look at what's going on and what the law says and what 2 3 policy is. If someone pays the fees but doesn't request extension of safekeeping, are 4 we obligated to keep it in safekeeping? 5 mean they haven't made a request so --6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: This is a --7 8 MEMBER ALBERTI: -- that's a big question for me. 9 10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: This is a moratorium zone, correct? 11 MEMBER ALBERTI: I understand that 12 but the law is very complicated and, if I 13 don't have a request for safekeeping, how do 14 I know that they want it in safekeeping? 15 16 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Is there --17 MEMBER ALBERTI: You have to see 18 it not just one statute at a time. You have to look at the regs as a whole. And I would 19 kind of like us to think about that with our 20 21 general counsel. So, I'm just posing a 22 question now. I don't have the answers.

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1	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. I
2	would just like to request maybe if there
3	could be some effort to actually get in
4	contact with this individual. I don't know.
5	I don't know if that's possible. Maybe or it
6	may not be, if it's possible.
7	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: What was that?
8	Sorry. Again?
9	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Yes,
10	Mr. Rodriguez?
11	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, am I to
12	understand that this license is in
13	safekeeping?
14	MR. GORDY: Yes.
15	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.
16	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Well,
17	consistent, then, with our policy to review
18	all the licenses that are in safekeeping, then
19	it behooves us to do everything we can to
20	conduct that process, whether they're here or
21	not. We need to look at the records and
22	determine, you know, where they're at.

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1	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.
2	MEMBER ALBERTI: But we don't have
3	much to look at except whether they paid their
4	fees and whether they're current with their
5	DCRA licenses and when they request the
6	extension.
7	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Then we need to
8	call them in somehow.
9	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.
10	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: We need to call
11	them in and have them appear before the Board.
12	MEMBER ALBERTI: And, if they
13	decline to come in, what do you do?
14	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Then, if
15	there's no interest, then we should put the
16	license away.
17	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. But
18	the thing is there is an interest, because
19	they've paid their fees. They've been paying
20	their fees, so there is an interest. But
21	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Who paid the
22	fees? The somebody who paid the fees should

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1	be contacted. Whoever paid the fees
2	MEMBER ALBERTI: They did.
3	Mr. Gordy did contact whoever paid the fees.
4	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Did you,
5	Mr. Gordy? I'm sorry. Did you have direct
6	contact with who paid the fees?
7	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No.
8	MR. GORDY: Yes. Well, via email,
9	we notified the licensee, particularly the
10	ones in safekeeping. Whenever renewal takes
11	place, we mail, because we know a lot of
12	establishments may have closed.
13	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes, sir.
14	MR. GORDY: Then, in addition to
15	the mailings, we will call them directly,
16	email, basically run down every avenue, in
17	terms of wanting contact, contact
18	methodologies to ensure that they get the
19	information that the license is in
20	safekeeping. You still are responsible for
21	renewing, paying, whatever the case may be.
22	My understanding is this

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1	individual renewed the license in 2013, March,
2	where all Class C Restaurant Licenses are
3	renewed.
4	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: So, there has
5	been contact, initially. And you're saying
6	that now there is no response, after second
7	contact?
8	MR. GORDY: Yes, sir. Our
9	licensing specialists worked with a
10	communication team to identify methods of
11	contact, alternative contact information, et
12	cetera to ensure we reached out or had
13	appropriate, viable information to contact
14	these licensees.
15	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Well, we
16	do need to somehow find a way to contact them
17	I guess.
18	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Yes,
19	Mr. Short?
20	MEMBER SHORT: If it's in our
21	purview, what you would recommend the Board
22	do, because we know there is an interest in

	Page 14
1	the business community for these licenses,
2	correct?
3	MR. GORDY: Absolutely.
4	MEMBER SHORT: Do you have a
5	recommendation to the Board?
6	MR. GORDY: In actuality, the
7	licensee understands its license is in
8	safekeeping. It's in a protected status.
9	And, if the licensee isn't responsive to
LO	anything, any responsibility to maintain, be
L1	responsible for, provide feedback on this
L2	license, then, you know, especially to
L3	Mr. Alberti's point, if it's been a year or so
L 4	and they haven't even bothered to extend the
L5	license or even apply to extend the license,
L6	in my opinion, that license should be kept.
L7	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Is there a
L8	legal obligation
L9	MEMBER SHORT: Thank you.
20	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I'm sorry.
21	MEMBER SHORT: No. Thank you very
22	much for that response and I'll make a

	Page 15
1	recommendation after I hear from the Chair.
2	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. And I
3	know you're not general counsel for the
4	Agency. So, my only question is, and it just
5	could be on in general, is I'm not clear on
6	the law that there is an obligation for a
7	license in safekeeping now to request
8	extensions, in a moratorium zone. We're heard
9	this morning and we've talked about it that
10	licenses in moratorium zones are different.
11	MR. GORDY: Well, I
12	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So, that may
13	be why there may not be a request for an
14	extension.
15	MEMBER ALBERTI: And I don't know.
16	I don't know.
17	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: No.
18	MEMBER ALBERTI: I think that's an
19	unanswered question and that's why I posed it
20	as a question to a lawyer.
21	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Right. Me,
22	too.

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1	MEMBER ALBERTI: The lawyer will
2	just have to look at it. I'm not going to
3	speculate at all on what that means for us.
4	I will remind my fellow Board members that, in
5	this case, there is absolutely no legal
6	obligation for them to appear at this hearing.
7	We requested them to come for a
8	fact finding. They didn't come. There's
9	nothing. I know of no legal obligation on
10	their part to appear for this hearing. Maybe
11	someone else can inform me, but
12	MEMBER SHORT: I think that's part
13	of our frustration. Can I just make a
14	recommendation, just for an idea for us to
15	discuss? Could we send a notice to the
16	licensee that cancellation's being considered?
17	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I wouldn't
18	vote for that.
19	MEMBER ALBERTI: I wouldn't.
20	MR. GORDY: Not if it's illegal.
21	MEMBER SHORT: I didn't say take
22	it from them. I said consider.

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1	MEMBER ALBERTI: No, I would not
2	do that.
3	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I would not.
4	MEMBER ALBERTI: Unless we have
5	confirmed from our legal staff that it's a
6	real option.
7	MEMBER SHORT: Okay.
8	MEMBER ALBERTI: So, why are we
9	there? We don't know.
10	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.
11	MEMBER ALBERTI: What else can we
12	do today?
13	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I think we've
14	gotten the information that we can get and
15	this was fact finding and that's
16	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Madam Chair, a
17	point of information here. Now, when there is
18	an application that is submitted to this Board
19	by, you know, by a potential licensee and,
20	when that license is granted, I have to study
21	this I know, but shouldn't there be some kind
22	of caveat in the application that allows for

Page 18 1 the Board to be in contact with any licensee, when it feels it's necessary? They have legal 2 3 consequences? MEMBER ALBERTI: That would have 4 to be in the statutes. We can ask our general 5 counsel to see if that's in the statute. 6 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: 7 Okay. think that concludes our hearing. 8 9 MEMBER ALBERTI: I am not aware 10 that there's any such requirement in our 11 statutes. CHAIRPERSON MILLER: 12 Okay. 13 MEMBER ALBERTI: I mean we have hearings. We have hearings that we sit down 14 and we get them to come. Well, in some ways, 15 16 they're not obligated to come. If they don't 17 come, there are consequences. In this case, I don't know what the consequence for their 18 failure to come is. I don't believe there is 19 20 any legally assigned consequences for 21 nonappearance at a fact finding like this. I may be wrong but that's --22

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1	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: I kind of
2	agree with you. I haven't seen where it's
3	written that they are. But, okay. We tried.
4	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: How can you
5	have a policy to have fact finding without
6	some accountability somewhere? I don't
7	understand that. You know, I'll keep studying
8	this on my own and with legal counsel. But
9	there should be some type of accountability
10	factor
11	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.
12	MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: in terms of
13	communication before the applicant and ABRA.
14	MR. GORDY: I wish I was rich. I
15	should be, but I'm not.
16	CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes. I think
17	we all agree that that's a good idea. But
18	we're just saying that we're not sure that
19	it's in the law really. But almost everybody
20	is showing up today. So, that's good. All
21	right. Thanks so much.
22	MR. GORDY: Thank you.

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2	[Whereupon, at 2:59 p.m., the fact
3	finding hearing was adjourned]
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Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc. 202-234-4433

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